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THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" There was no cut. They were mistakenly paid on a time-scale. The matter is now set right."

Village munsifs as postmasters.

8-50 a.m. * 2233 *Q.*—SRI K. R. VISWANATHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Revenue be pleased to state the number of village munsifs who are acting as extra-departmental postmasters?

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU :—" As village officers are part-time servants and are free to take up other remunerative work in addition to their regular duties with the permission of the superior officers, it is likely that the number of village officers who are acting as extra departmental postmasters is large. The Government therefore consider that the time and labour involved in the collection of the information required by the Member will not be commensurate with the benefit which will be derived thereby."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" Sir, the Revenue Divisional Officer gives permission only to those whom he favours and rejects the petitions of many without assigning any reason. Inasmuch as the policy of the Government is to allow village officials to supplement their income, will the Government at least see that in cases of refusal, the reasons for the refusal are given? "

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU :—" Sir, the hon. Member is perhaps referring to the Malabar district. If the hon. Member can bring specific instances to my notice, I will arrange to enquire into them."

Construction of a new bridge across the Cauvery.

* 2234 *Q.*—SRI N. RAJAGOPALAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether there is a proposal to construct a new bridge over the river Cauvery between Srirangam and Tiruchirappalli on the trunk road: and

(*b*) if so, when the work will be taken up?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) The detailed plans and estimate for the work have been forwarded to the Government of India and it will be taken up for execution after the Government of India's financialia's sanction to the estimate is received."

SRI N. RAJAGOPALAN :—" In view of the fact that it would be a hardship to the village-folk to carry their produce to the market which is situated in the heart of the town, will the Minister

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consult the Engineers and revise the estimate and construct the bridge at the site west of the present bridge as originally proposed?"

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—"This has almost reached a final stage. It has been suggested to construct a bridge across the river Cauvery downstream the railway bridge. It has gone up to the Government of India. If at this stage any change is to be implemented, it will be a matter of difficulty."

SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM :—"The site selected for the bridge is something like a mile from the present site. This means that it will take three miles for people from Srirangam to reach the Tiruchirappalli market. In view of this difficulty that will be experienced by the people, will the Government reconsider their proposal? Even if a final stage has been reached, the work has not yet commenced. If the bridge is constructed at the place where the present bridge is situated, it will be very useful. So, will the Government revise their proposal and send it to the Central Government?"

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—"Sir, it has been given up. The Consulting Engineer, Road Development, of the Government of India had come and inspected the site and approved this change. The proposal has also gone up to the Government of India. They have suggested this under their National Highway programme as a matter of policy. The other bridge will also continue to be there to serve the public. I do not think we can revert back at this stage. If we tamper with it now, having reached a stage of finality, the whole thing will have to be re-examined and there will be considerable delay."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—"May I know whether it is a fact that the proposed bridge is a third one, the other two bridges being the railway bridge and a foot bridge used by pedestrians and for vehicular traffic? If it is so, what is the necessity for constructing this extra bridge, especially, when there are many places in the State which clamour for bridges?"

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—"It is a national highway and the other bridge is old, very narrow in width and not suitable for modern fast-moving vehicular traffic. Hence, as a measure of reform, they have suggested the construction of the new bridge just in consonance with the standards of National Highways."

SRI P. B. K. RAJACHIDAMBARAM :—"In view of the fact that the old bridge is going to be retained, will it not serve the local needs of people going between Srirangam and Tiruchirappalli and the new bridge the through traffic in the National Highway?"

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—"Yes, that is the idea."